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<<乔姆斯基>>

图书基本信息

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前言

Much has happened in the five years since I finished the first edition of this book. Linguistics has advanced, the cognitive sciences have exploded, the world has become ever more dangerous, and Chomsky has continued to lead a dual existence as academic and activist. To take account of all these changes is impossible. Nevertheless, I have made many additions and amendments. First, I have corrected mistakes where I have become aware of them, and attempted to clarify points which were unclear. Second, I have updated the notes and references where that has been within my ability. As no one can be master of all the disciplines touched on here, I have concentrated on updating those sections pertaining to areas where Chomskys recent work has been directly relevant. As a result, the bibliog- raphy contains entries for about forty new works by Chomsky himself: over fifteen new or revised books, and another twenty-five new articles. At the same time, the secondary literature on Chomsky has also burgeoned: major works have appeared by Antony & Hornstein （2003）, McGilvray （1999）, Mitchell & Schoeffel （2002）, Winston （2002）, and many others. These, as well as about a hundred other new entries are likewise included and, where relevant, I have simultaneously expanded the notes to include reference to these new items. Third, I have attempted to give some indication of how the field and the world have changed since 1998. Chomsky has continued to produce seminal work in linguistics, and I have revised the relevant sections of chapter 2 and added some discussion of developments in Minimalism accordingly. This has entailed making a number of modifications to the first edition, where I had failed to lay the relevant groundwork for some of the issues that now occupy center-stage. I have also updated the discussion of evolution, another area where Chomsky has produced interesting new work. Most obviously, I have added a section on the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath - "9-11" - which have overwhelmingly preoccupied Chomskys time and energy. These revisions and extensions have necessitated other minor changes throughout the book.

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内容概要

In this rigorous yet accessible account of Chomsky ' s work and influence, Nell Smith analyses Chomsky' s key contributions to the study of language and the study of mind He gives a ~led" and partly historical exposition of Chomsky ' s linguistic theorizing, and examines the ideas （such as deep and surface structure） for which he is best known. Smith discusses the psychological and philosophical implications of Chomsky s work, and gues that he has fundamentally changed the way we think of ourselves, gaining a position in the history of ideas on a par with that of Darwin or Descartes. Finally, he examines Chomsky' s political ideas and how these fit intellectually with his scholarly work. Smith argues that, despite Chomsky ' s own disavowal of any very close connection, there are fundamental ideas of rationality, creativity and modularity that draw together the disparate strands of his vast output. Throughout, Smith explores the controversy surrounding Chomsky's work, and explains why he has been both adulated and vilified. This second edition has been thoroughly updated and revised to account for Chomsky's most recent work, including his continued contributions to linguistics （in particular new developments in the Minimalist Program）, his further discussion on evolution, and his extensive work on the events of September 11,2001 and their aftermath. The bibliography and notes have been expanded to account for the rapidly growing secondary literature on Chomsky's work, as well as the many new works by Chomsky himself. It will be welcomed by students and researchers across the disciplines of linguistics, philosophy, cognitive science and politics, and anyone with an interest in the impact of Chomsky's work.

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章节摘录

Katzs answer is straightforward: he claims that the properties of the psy- chological constructs postulated by linguists entail that they must be treated as abstract objects, and Chomskys failure to acknowledge this results in the whole of his framework being called into question. The reason for this rather dramatic conclusion is that as abstract objects by hypothesis have no causal powers, and Chomskys theory deals with causal entities, there is an unbridge- able gap between the phenomena to be explained and the devices postulated to explain them.46 There are two reasons why one could conclude that the objection is not cogent. First, we have seen that Chomsky is committed to representationalism, and although abstract objects themselves may not have causal powers, representa- tions of abstract objects by an organism may indeed have causal powers. Second, Chomskys notion of I-language anyway renders it immune to Katzs claims. Part of Katzs discussion revolves around the mathematical properties of the set of sentences that constitute a natural language: is this set denumerably infinite or is it non-denumerably infinite ? As Alexander George has documented, the argument that languages are non-denumerably infinite is flawed.48 But even if it was not, there would be no serious implication for Chomskys position, because the argument presupposes a view of （E-）language that he has explicitly repudi- ated: language for him is I-language, a state of the mind-brain, and not a set of sentences. His claim is stronger than Katz and others seem to realize: the issue of denumerability is irrelevant, because the conception of a language as consist- ing of a set of sentences is incoherent in the absence of some indication of how that set is generated, and this is feasible only in terms of procedures which are parasitic on I-language. Katz is aware of the I-language/E-language distinction, but he appears to ascribe comparable status to both,49 writing that "although theories of the speakers knowledge of a language are no doubt psychological theories, there is no reason to think theories of the languge [sic] known are also psychological theOries." Indeed, but what he misses is that, for Chomsky, there is no such entity as "the language known" distinct from the speakers knowl- edge of it, so there is no possible theory of it. Accordingly, Katzs conclusion that sentences are abstract objects and "Chomskys generativism as well as his psychologism have to be given up" fails to go through. Katzs critique appears to rest on the mistaken assumption that because a finitely represented device, the I-language, has an infinite range, it must itself be infinite: he writes of "expres- sions [being] mental/neural objects.5~~ The conclusion seems unwarranted; it is the means of generating expressions which is a mental/neural object, not the formulae generated. We can carry out any of an infinite number of operations in various domains - moral, social, ethical, visual, cognitive - without it being necessary to postulate an infinity of abstract objects for each one. Language deploys a dedicated syntax, characterized by specific principles which can, where relevant, be mathematically specified.

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